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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [CU](#) [YI](#) [SI](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVENIA: BALKANS, MIDEAST AND (NOW) CUBA ON
RUPEL'S MIND

Classified By: COM Thomas B. Robertson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. Slovenian FM Dimitrij Rupel sees Kosovo as the make or break issue for the entire Western Balkans, and in a meeting with EUR PDAS Kurt Volker, urged continued unity between the US and EU as well as a comprehensive program with strong western perspective for Serbia, Kosovo and the rest of the region. With Rupel about to embark on a Latin America tour of Argentina, Chile, Peru, and the Dominican Republic, discussion of support for democracy in Cuba was timely. Though never a front burner issue for Slovenia, Rupel understands Slovenia must engage as President of the EU and, if all goes according to plan, a new member of the UN Human Rights Council. He committed to finding a venue to discuss this, perhaps when he stops in the Dominican Republic. Anticipating a Mid-East trip in early May, Rupel also requested consultations with the Department prior to his departure, which post will work to facilitate. End Summary.

12. (C) In a 45 minute meeting with PDAS Kurt Volker on April 10, FM Rupel seized the opportunity to drive home his strong views on the way forward on Kosovo. Starting from the position that the Ahtasaari plan was the only viable solution, Rupel expanded on his view that much more must be done to sweeten the deal for Serbia, eliminate any daylight between the U.S. and EU positions in the UN, and keep Russia from becoming the spoiler. Rupel said a grand plan for the region encompassing all the former Yugoslav republics was necessary in order to alleviate the "great jealousies" that develop when the former Yugoslav republics make comparisons among themselves. Rupel worried the average Serb was not attracted "enough" to Europe because the promise of a Stability and Association Agreement has no real meaning, whereas the solid promise of EU membership does. Volker agreed with Rupel on the importance of resolving Kosovo status soon saying Slovenian views align with the US in this regard. Getting Kosovo right will help move the entire region forward. We also agree on the need to reach out to Serbia. Rupel was supportive of bringing a UN resolution to vote in the Security Council by the end of May since this would absolve any eventual Serbian government of responsibility for the Kosovo decision.

UNHRC - Rupel will Talk to Steinmeier

13. (C) PDAS Volker raised the issue of the UN Human Rights

Council and Rupel immediately made a plea for the U.S. not to introduce a third candidate as this would mean Slovenia's "excommunication." Volker assured him we would not seek to introduce a third candidate before Slovenia was safely elected to the UNHRC, however, we needed Slovenia and the entire EU to work with us to defeat Belarus's bid. He added that we also want to be able to indicate that Bosnia should be the alternate choice, prior to its formally becoming a candidate. Rupel remained wary but said he would contact German FM Steinmeier to urge Germany to do more as EU President to galvanize opinion against Belarus.

Cuba - Slovenia Will Be More Engaged

¶4. (C) Referring to the recent visit of Spanish FM Moratinos to Cuba and his failure to meet with democratic dissidents, PDAS Volker suggested to Rupel that now would be the opportunity for the EU to press forward on a common policy calling for a democratic transition in Cuba. Rupel appreciated the need to say something to lend support for Cubans to be given the chance to choose their government. He was not optimistic that it could be worked out, and he asked about meeting with Cuban FM Roque on the margins of the EU-Rio meeting in the Dominican Republic the next week. Volker said that engaging below the level of minister was important especially if it offered an opportunity to press for more freedom for small and medium enterprises, release of political prisoners and a chance to discuss the political direction of Cuba. EU states need to take care, however, also to meet with and empower dissidents in Cuba.

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Mideast - Welcome Consultations

¶5. (C) Almost immediately after he returns from his Latin America trip, Rupel plans to travel to the Middle East. Volker offered a rundown of our current views of the internal Palestinian political situation and praised the excellent partnership of the EU in the Quartet. Rupel told Volker that he would be very interested in consulting with Department experts before his departure on May 6.

Bled Forum - US Invited to Participate

¶6. (C) Before the meeting ended, Rupel promised to think about who might be a good European representative in Afghanistan and he made a pitch for USG participation in Slovenia's (now) annual event - the Bled Forum - taking place in late August 2007. The theme this year will be the EU with expansion and energy cooperation as main topics. Rupel suggested they have reasonable expectations that British PM Tony Blair will attend.

¶7. (U) PDAS Volker cleared this cable.
ROBERTSON